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Report of Interrogation : No. 5858 of

9 November 1945

I/O : Capt. HALLE

PW : HILGER, Gustav
Rank : Counsellor of Embassy
Unit : Foreign Office
Capt'd : 19 May 1945, Salzburg.

Veracity : Believed reliable.

Report : Answer to Periodic Intelligence Questionnaire, MIS Sep-Oct 1945

Question USSR # 6 : Have any special steps been undertaken to incorporate the Baltic Republics into the Soviet Union.

Answer # 6 : The first steps of the Soviet government to conquer the Baltic Republics and incorporate them into the USSR were taken right after the conclusion of the treaties between Germany and Russia delimitating their respective spheres of influence (23 August and 28 September 1939). The Soviet government proceeded gradually in this in order to lend a cloak of legality to its actions. Estonia had to sign a pact of mutual non-aggression and assistance with the Soviet government in September 1939 and at that time had to give certain bases in its territory to Soviet Russia. A similar procedure was later adapted with Lithuania and Latvia. The concession of such bases was always connected with the stationing of Russian troops at those places. Unable to expect help from anybody, the Baltic states had to endure these attacks on their sovereignty whether they liked them or not. The Baltic governments hoped to avoid a worse fate by being subservient to the Soviet Government.

Similar proposals were made to Finland; but Finland refused to accept them; the war and Finland's defeat resulted. This seemed to confirm the wisdom of the course of the Baltic governments.

proved

Later developments ~~proven~~ that the Soviet government had decided right from the start to incorporate the Baltic states into the Soviet Union. The pacts of non-aggression and assistance were nothing but the preparatory stages on the road towards that aim; they served the Soviet government by lending a cloak of legality to its actions.

After the Soviet government had occupied the bases (Liepaja, Tallinn, etc.) and brought large contingents of troops into the Baltic republics, it provoked incidents following a definite scheme. These incidents were taken as a pretext for accusing the governments of the Baltic states of having broken the treaties and larger contingents of troops were brought in for "security" reasons. Soon afterwards the governments of the Baltic states were overthrown one after the other with the aid of red bayonets and were replaced by new governments formed with the active help of Russian emissaries (Vyshinsky, etc.). These governments consisted of persons controlled by Russians and forced the Soviet system on their peoples.

NAZI WAR CRIMES DISCLOSURE ACT

EXEMPTIONS Section 3(b)

- (1) (A) Privacy ☐
(2) (B) Methods/Sources ☒
(2) (C) Foreign Relations ☐

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It was only one step from there to the acceptance by the Soviet Union of the requests of these young Soviet states to be incorporated into the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics. This action was celebrated as an expression of the free will of the Baltic peoples.

In order to prevent any resistance right from the start, the Soviet government initiated mass arrests and deportations of former government officials and other representatives of the former leading circles (officers, politicians, intellectuals, business leaders, etc.) immediately after the formation of the new Baltic governments. After the incorporation of the Baltic states into the Soviet Union these arrests continued on an increased scale. The victims amounted to several tens of thousands. After a short interruption the arrests and deportations set in with new vigor just before the German invasion in 1941.

During the course of the war with Germany the Baltic states were temporarily lost to the Soviet Union. This loss was considered by the Soviet government to be no different from the temporary abandonment of Russian and Ukrainian territory. The Baltic states were considered to be an inseparable and integral part of the USSR because their peoples had expressed their will to become part of the Soviet Union in a "free" election in 1940.

There is a provision in the Soviet constitution to the effect that any Union republic has the right to secede from the Union if it so desires. A realization of such a desire is of course entirely unthinkable. Any symptoms of such an intention would be suppressed immediately by the NKVD.

From the standpoint of power politics and economy the possession of the Baltic states is an absolute necessity for the Soviet Union. Without them access to the Baltic Sea would be closed to the USSR. Peter the Great did not fight in vain a bloody war which lasted 21 years at the beginning of the eighteenth century to conquer the Baltic states. Liepaja is the only ice-free harbor the Soviet Union possesses on the Baltic Sea. (Note: Koenigsberg was only recently acquired). The Soviet Union will therefore never abandon its position in the Baltic states and will be willing to defend it with all the means at its disposal.